

MARRY YOUNG, LOVE DEEPLY, AVOID RELATIVES, ADVICE OF DIVORCE JUDGE TO NEWLYWEDS

Chicago Jurist Who Has Unraveled 6500 Matrimonial Tangles Says Mutual Trust and Good Cooking Are Essential to Marital Happiness

"DODGE MOTHER-IN-LAW, LIVE YOUR OWN LIVES," JUDGE SABATH URGES

Prohibition Has Worked No Improvement in the Normal Married State, Believes Man Who Has Made "Trial Divorce" an Accepted Institution

IF YOU had listened to 6500 divorce cases during two years could you fail to be other than a misogynist? If you had sat on the court bench and heard dinned in your ears the continual woe of wrecked homes, wouldn't you be something of a cynic concerning wedlock?

Superior Court Judge Joseph Sabath, of Chicago, is neither a cynic nor a misogynist. He is a marriage booster. And it is Judge Sabath who, during the last two years, has established a record by hearing those 6500 divorce cases.

Nor is Judge Sabath averse to divorce. He is in favor of it. He is more in favor, however, of what he terms a "trial divorce," wherein, by a certain twist in forensic procedure, he can put married couples on parole until they have had time to smooth out the kinks in their marital relationships.

Reconciliation is Judge Sabath's biggest work. Couple after couple have walked into his court with hatred in their hearts for each other, and gone out arm in arm. Some have been divorced and then, on the anniversary of their divorce, have called on Judge Sabath and been remarried by him.

But the tragic scenes enacted before him, the unhappy men and women who have poured their tales into his sympathetic ears, have brought a nervous breakdown upon Judge Sabath. And still it has not shattered his faith in marriage.

"I began to worry so over reconciliations," said the Judge, seen in his sick room, "that I could stand it no longer. I was getting a wrong point of view on divorce. I know it is a good thing, for there are three parties to a divorce—the man and woman and the community."

Then the Judge gave this characteristic statement: "Tell the young folk not to fear marriage. If a youth has a steady job and a loyal sweetheart he should marry. The couple should then live alone, away from parents and relatives, and fight their own battles. They will be happy."

Judge Sabath has lived the kind of life he urges others to live. He was married at eighteen without any alluring prospects.

"Even with my unfortunate and one-sided viewpoint," continued Judge Sabath, "I would be foolish to decry marriage. There are really few divorces in relation to the population of this country. Every credit man in a store knows that the big majority of the people are honest. I know that the big majority of the people in the United States are fine and wholesome."

Wave of Divorce After Impulsive War Weddings

"There have been more divorces during the last two years than previously. It is the reaction to war hysteria. Girls married uniforms. Men married girls they had known only a short time. The day of reckoning came with peace-time. The glamour wore off."

"I find many of these unfortunate young people in my court. Now whenever I get both sides in the court, I take the man and woman into my chambers. But let me add here, that there are many divorce cases in which only one side appears. The other stays away, saying: 'Let him or her have a divorce. I won't fight.' The one appellant gets a divorce by default."

"They are unfortunate; I can't reach them. But when they come together, I know I have some chance. I talk to them. I try to get to the bottom of their grievances, sometimes startlingly silly things. When I finally make them tell me what the trouble is, the thing is over. When they have told it in words they see how trivial it is in relation to a life of happiness."

"I cannot say what I suggest for reconciling estranged couples. All human nature is different. I have to use different means. Sometimes I have to resort to foolish and silly measures, as foolish and as silly as the petty differences which have arisen between the two. For some of these things to become known outside of my chamber would make me appear foolish—but they work."

"However, the main thing is to make them tell you what the trouble is. Sometimes they haven't even given it any consideration. It is a revelation to them to see in such a way just what has divided their home. They are more than glad to forget everything and go back together. And they don't forget me."

Here Judge Sabath waved to a corner of the room, which was literally filled with flowers.

"Couples I have brought back together have sent me these flowers," he said with a pleased smile.

Then he continued: "Sometimes after a long talk I fail



Judge Joseph Sabath, Chicago Municipal Court, whose work in hearing 6500 divorce cases has resulted in an unusually deep insight into marital difficulties



Judge Sabath with Edwin W. Hurry and Elizabeth Gates, whom he remarried on the anniversary of their divorce

"65% of All Divorces Are the Fault of the Husbands"

—Says Judge Sabath, after examining more than 6500 suits for permanent separation.

"The majority of the cases are desertion and cruelty," he declares. "The men see other women who make a fuss over them, and they lose their heads and leave their wives."

"The other woman may be a little better dressed; she may be a little younger."

to get to the bottom of the trouble. Both sides are sulky, stubborn. So I say to them, 'I am going to give you a trial divorce. Come back here in six weeks from this date and we will see what can be done toward a permanent decree.'"

"They go away to live apart during that time. I make it plain to them that they cannot see each other. If they did they would be in contempt of court. What I really do is to continue the case for a time. That is my method of granting a trial divorce."

Divorces Often Averted by the Lapse of Time

"In nearly every case when the couple meet in my chambers after the six weeks they are ready to start life over again. They have been alone, have had an opportunity to get a perspective on their life together, and they have found the basic trouble."

"I strike the case from the records, and another divorce is averted."

"There are some cases where I refuse to grant a divorce unless under the most serious circumstances. That is when there are children. This becomes a terrible matter for a judge. It is often hard to decide which parent is entitled to the custody of the children."

"When children become the wards of the court they are placed at a disadvantage. They are handicapped in the beginning of life. I have a whole string of little ones who are wards of my court, and I call on them now and then and send them toys and try to replace their parents."

"It might be added that each Christmas, Judge Sabath carries the Yuletide spirit to every child whose parents have been legally separated by him."

"In the case of children, divorces are serious even when you can conscientiously place them in custody of one of the parents. Among their little friends they are jeered with 'Their father and mother, are divorced. They fight.'"

"Little children take these things to heart."

"Even when the children are in the custody of the court I do not give up hope of a reconciliation. It is true that these little hands can join together the older hands."

Judge Sabath says that 65 per cent of the divorces are the fault of the husbands.

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Duty of the Wife to Dress Attractively

"Sometimes you might figure these cases out and say that it was the fault of the wives. They should not allow themselves to grow old, or to become untidy in their dress."

be assured of affection in return. There is no woman, except in rare instances, who does not want affection from her husband and who will be content without this affection.

"And she will always return the affection."

Judge Sabath seizes on all opportunities to effect reconciliation. For instance, the day before Christmas last year seven couples who came to his court for divorce found the spark of love rekindled and left arm in arm. And to another couple, already divorced but involved in an alimony dispute, came a mutual inclination of forgiveness, a plan to dine together Christmas and a promise of another chance.

"That's a big baby for your wife to be holding. Suppose you take her," the Judge suggested to Joseph Svach, who was being sued by his wife, Eva.

The tiny arms about the father's neck did it—that and Judge Sabath and Christmas time. Svach looked at his wife. She smiled. And there wasn't any divorce in the Svach family.

And so it went with six other couples. At the end of his day Judge Sabath smiled.

"It's easy to reconcile people this time of year," he said.

Then, just as he was going to adjourn, John Dal' was hailed before the Judge. His divorced wife, Ladenne, had had him arrested for failure to pay back alimony. But John had a grievance.

Last year, he said, he sent her a turkey for Christmas, but it failed to bring an invitation to dine.

Judge Sabath suggested that John provide another turkey this year and that Ladenne invite him to share it with their two children. They left the courtroom and later were completely reconciled.

Perhaps Ladenne knew how to cook, but there are some wives who come before the judge who do not. In one day recently two men asked for divorce because of their wives' poor cooking.

"If people only knew how important good cooking is in the life of the happy home, more attention would be paid to the culinary education of our daughters," remarked the Judge.

Came Elmer Kittell, who said to the Judge: "Your honor, I haven't been well since I was married. I seem to eat enough, but the food is cooked so long that it doesn't do me any good. All my wife can cook is hard-boiled eggs."

The second man to complain that day was John Lingner, and although his statement was rather broad, the Judge nodded in confirmation.

"Cooking is becoming a neglected art, and men with indigestion find everything wrong about the home," says the Judge.

Before a meeting of the Woman's Protective League, Judge Sabath later outlined his views on the subject. He advocated eighth-grade public school classes in matrimony, and trial divorces.

"Such a course would teach the most important lesson a child could have," said the Judge. "Boys and girls together should be taught the necessary caution in selecting a life mate and meeting the problems of marriage."

"It is the duty of the State, which must eventually suffer from marital difficulties, to provide this education."

"There has been too much of a tendency to treat the divorce court as a vaudeville show. Instead, it is the stage where tremendous tragedies are enacted. Of the 6500 cases I have tried few of the principals showed that marriage had been seriously considered."



Judge's Ten Commandments for Newly Married Couples

- I. Marry young.
- II. Know each other well before marriage.
- III. Have children or adopt them.
- IV. Move away from each other's family.
- V. Realize the responsibility of marriage relation—bear and forbear.
- VI. Wives must cook well if they would keep their husbands.
- VII. Husbands should confide their business affairs to their wives, and the wives should take an interest in them.
- VIII. Wives must be neat. If their husbands like the latest styles, rouge, bobbed hair, etc., the wives should govern themselves accordingly.
- IX. Husbands should see that their wives get plenty of entertainment. They should take them to movies, for auto rides, walks and swims, or whatever the wife likes.
- X. If there has been a quarrel, kiss and make up before going to sleep. Never let such feelings last over night.

Sunday to Saturday, and three times a day.

"Can't your wife cook as well as your mother used to?" the Judge queried.

"Judge, I haven't seen a wife that could cook as good as her mother," yawned Lingner, and although his statement was rather broad, the Judge nodded in confirmation.

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"Both husband and wife must remember this in the nervous days following marriage, that the well-meant advice of parents and relatives may be the wrong thing to guide them."



Mother-in-Law No Joke; She Breeds Discord

In advice to young married couples to get away from their parents, the Judge said:

"The mother-in-law, after all, is not merely a stage joke. She is a reality. She generally has more old-fashioned ideas about raising children and doing things than the young wife. Times change, but the mother-in-law seldom changes with them."

"A young wife or young mother can generally work out her own problems best if left alone. She generally doesn't resent her own mother telling her how to do things, because she goes ahead and does them her own way. But the husband's mother? That's different."

"Then the wife's mother can prove an irritating factor to the young husband."

"The father-in-law, on the other hand, generally sits back and says nothing. You see, he has his mind on his business and other things, and such start big breaches—never bother him."

But the Judge does not always take the young woman's part.

"There is an enormous social drift toward premature adulthood," he says. "Girls don't want to be called girls. They want to be called women from the time they cut their second teeth. They want to dress like grown-up ladies and drunkards, 201. He showed that this was not a decrease in bills charging drunkenness."

"I cannot say prohibition has been

increase public education—for self-control, the only real restraint, comes best through schooling.

"Under modern handicaps public schools do more than the public can rightfully expect, considering the difficulty of getting trained teachers and sufficient money for operation, and it may be asking too much to urge the schools to attack the 'moral-glory' philosophy that is now ruling our young people."

"The school must curb this unnatural and often disastrous addition of childhood if it can be done. Courts can sometimes mend breaks, but it is better for the community if the breaks never occur, and schools are the hope of those who want to see this fever of forced growth cooled."

Dry Laws Have Not Changed Married Life, He Says

"The dry laws have failed to help married life," the Judge says. "I have seen no improvement in marital relations since the passage of the prohibition amendment."

Out of 2000 cases, Judge Sabath showed that women had filed 1450 bills and men 550. The charges in the bills were divided as follows: Desertion, 975; cruelty, 482; misconduct, 297; and drunkenness, 246. He showed that this was not a decrease in bills charging drunkenness.



His Beliefs I Married While Young

This case got entirely too much for me," said the Judge sadly. "I'm afraid that it will have a bad effect. Other young women may try to emulate the actions of Peggy Joyce. They may be misled by the way the newspapers played up the affair."

Judge Sabath is fifty-two. He came to the United States at the age of fifteen from Bohemia. It cost him \$10 passage money and \$1 from New York to Chicago. He married three years later. His wife was also foreign-born.

"I believe that a fellow should marry young if he expected to amount to anything," he said.

He was employed in various industries, making his own way through the Chicago College of Law. In June, 1914, the Chicago Law School conferred on him the degree of master of law. He has presided over every branch of the Chicago Municipal Court system, and as Judge has heard 80,000 cases.

He has three children, all married. His oldest son, Albert Sabath, who was "Fatty" Arbuckle's Eastern representative during the recent trial, is barred from his courtroom.

"He cannot try his cases before me," says the Judge. "He must go elsewhere."

Judge Sabath has four grandchildren. He has six brothers in Chicago and four sisters, all married.

"They all married young but Congressman A. J. Sabath, who waited longer than the rest," said the Judge.

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